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First Woman to Lead Major U.S., Canada Military Commands Addresses 2017 UNH Commencement

Saturday, May 20, 2017

(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2017/05/20/FIRST-WOMAN-TO-LEAD-MAJOR-US-CANADA-MILITARY-COMMANDS-ADDRESSES-2017-UNH)

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DURHAM, N.H. – “Yes, our all-volunteer military needs people willing to raise their right hands and recite the oath, but our nation needs what all of you graduates – I repeat, all of you – have to offer,” University of New Hampshire commencement speaker U.S. Air Force Gen. Lori Robinson ‘81 said during the university's 146th commencement held Saturday, May 20, 2017. More than 2,300 undergraduate and 448 graduate students — including 79 military veterans —representing 41 states and 30 foreign countries received degrees.

Robinson, the first woman to lead a major combatant command in the history of the U.S. Armed Forces, urged the graduates to consider how they can use the skills and knowledge they gained at UNH



U.S. AIR FORCE GEN. LORI ROBINSON ‘81, THE FIRST WOMAN TO LEAD A MAJOR COMBATANT COMMAND IN THE HISTORY OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES, DELIVERED THE SPEECH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMENCEMENT SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2017, IN DURHAM.

CREDIT: UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

to serve something bigger than themselves.

“No matter what your career ambitions may be, no matter what line of work you may have in mind, I’d suggest to you that as citizens of this great country, we are all called to serve...to serve our communities, our nation, our world,” she said. “Service can take many forms. It can begin at the local level, in our communities. For the past four or so years, you’ve all been part of a dynamic community here on campus and in this great college town. You have gained valuable skills in building a community. Wherever you are headed next, you now have the opportunity to take those skills and use them to strengthen your next community, our nation...our world.”

In his welcoming remarks to graduates, their families and commencement guests, UNH President Mark Huddleston also called on the graduates to help build and strengthen communities around the world.

“There has never been a time, at least in my lifetime, when our communities are more in need of the imagination, empathy and commitment that you will bring to build and strengthen them,” he said. “These are troubled days in America, indeed troubled days in much of the world.

“My challenge to our graduates today is simple: keep listening to those better angels,” he said. “Hold fast to the moral moorings passed on to you from your moms and dads and aunts and uncles and rabbis and pastors and imams and from other leaders in your communities: tolerance, humility, respect, compassion, charity. You brought these values with you to this great university....Bring those values with you back into the world.”

Maureen Beauregard '87 received the Granite State Award for her work to provide housing and services for individuals and families affected by homelessness. She started Families in Transition in 1991 after working as a substance abuse counselor and for the state's Division for Children and Youth Services. Today Families in Transition houses more than 200 individuals and families in residences in Manchester, Concord and Dover. The organization received Business NH Magazine's Nonprofit of the Year Award in 2013, and in 2011 Beauregard was named one of six Outstanding Women in Business by New Hampshire Business Review.

Along with Robinson, Gov. Christopher Sununu, former N.H. State Senator Edward Dupont Jr., and Maureen Hurley '77, received honorary degrees. Sununu is serving his first term as governor and is currently the youngest governor in the country. He served three terms on the New Hampshire Executive Council representing 32 cities and towns in Rockingham and Hillsborough counties. Dupont is the founder of The Dupont Group, a Concord-based government relations and public affairs firm he started in 1993 after five terms in the N.H. State Senate. After attending UNH he started Strafford Fuels. He is a past member of the University System Board of Trustees. Business NH Magazine has named him one of the top 10 most influential people in the state nine times. Hurley recently retired from the family-owned Rich Products Corporation after more than 30 years. Under her leadership as executive vice president and chief administrative officer, the Buffalo, New York, company gained national attention for its workplace ethics. As a result, she received the American Business Ethics Award, which recognizes companies that exemplify high standards of ethical behavior in their everyday business conduct.

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH's research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

Editor's Notes:

Photographs available to download here: <https://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/2017/05/unh-commencement-2017-press-release-images>
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Caption 1: U.S. Air Force Gen. Lori Robinson '81, the first woman to lead a major combatant command in the history of the U.S. Armed Forces, delivered the speech at the University of New Hampshire commencement Saturday, May 20, 2017, in Durham.

Credit: University of New Hampshire Communications and Public Affairs

Caption 2: President Mark Huddleston addresses the University of New Hampshire commencement Saturday, May 20, 2017, in Durham.

Credit: University of New Hampshire Communications and Public Affairs

Caption 3: More than 2,300 undergraduate and 448 graduate students received degrees at the University of New Hampshire's commencement ceremonies Saturday, May 20, 2017.

Credit: University of New Hampshire Communications and Public Affairs

Caption 4: More than 2,300 undergraduate and 448 graduate students received degrees at the University of New Hampshire's commencement ceremonies Saturday, May 20, 2017.

Credit: University of New Hampshire Communications and Public Affairs

Speaker Remarks

Lori Robinson '81

<http://www.unh.edu/main/commencement-2017-keynote-address> (<http://www.unh.edu/main/commencement-2017-keynote-address>)

President Mark Huddleston

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May 2017 Graduates

<https://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/news/release/2017/05/19/university-new-hampshire-announces-may-2017-graduates>

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